Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended)   A system for matching entities having needs to entities having capability to meet the needs, the system comprising:

a plurality of needs profiles, wherein each need profile comprises a data record specifying attributes about a need;

a plurality of capability profiles, wherein each capability profile comprises a data record specifying a set of attributes of an entity having a capability of meeting a need; and

a matching engine coupled to repetitively and automatically examine the needs profiles and capability profiles to identify matched profiles and for each pair of matched profiles to determine a pair of scores indicating a compatibility of a particular match to each of the matched profiles, wherein a match comprises a set of profiles judged to be substantially compatible based upon correspondence of the attributes specified therein.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1 further comprising a notification message generated to first and second users associated with each profile in a particular one of the pairs of matched profiles a matched profile, wherein the notification message comprises the match score associated with the particular one of the profiles with the two match scores being determined based on differing sets of matched attributes that are weighted independently by the first and second users.

3. (Original) The system of claim 2 wherein the notification message includes a selected subset of attributes from the matched profile(s).

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4. (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 3 further comprising:

a response message generated by a recipient of a notification message; and

a detailed notification message generated to the users associated with the matched profiles in response to receiving response messages from both users associated with a particular matched profile.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the each need profile specifies attributes that describe a human resources need and each capability profile comprises attributes that describe skills of a job candidate.

6. (Original) The system of claim 5 wherein the job candidate attributes include attributes describing the associated candidate's qualifications.

7. (Original) The system of claim 5 wherein the job candidate attributes describe the associated candidate's desire to use particular skills in a future employment.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the needs profile data record is persistent.

9. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the capability profile data record is persistent.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

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12. (Currently Amended)   A job applicant agent comprising:

a user interface for gathering information from a job applicant;

a data record generated from the gathered information, the data record comprising a plurality of attributes describing skills of an associated job applicant, the data record being formatted for use in and continuously accessible by an external matching engine, wherein the data record further comprises attributes describing the associated job applicant's desire to utilize specified skills in future job assignments; and

a network interface configured to communicate the data record to the external matching engine.

13. (Original) The applicant agent of claim 12 wherein the data record is formatted to enable the external matching engine to readily detect matches between the described skills and required skills of a hiring agent data record accessible by the matching engine.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended)   An automated hiring agent comprising:

a user interface for gathering information from a human hiring agent;

a data record generated from the gathered information, the data record comprising a plurality of attributes describing skills required by an associated job, the data record being formatted for use in and continuously accessible by an external matching engine, wherein the data record comprises public data accessible by users accessing the external matching engine and restricted data for use by the external matching engine in obtaining a match for the data record and for sharing with the users accessing the external matching engine based on predefined rules; and

a network interface configured to communicate the data record to the external matching engine.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The hiring agent of claim 15 further comprising a template data record, the template data record comprising predefined attributes describing the skills required by the associated job, wherein the user interface is populated with information from the template data record before gathering information from the human hiring agent.

18. (Original) A matching engine for matching attributes specified by a plurality of hiring agents with attributes specified by a plurality of job applicant agents, the matching engine comprising:

a database storing a plurality of hiring agents and a plurality of job applicant agents;

a mechanism for continuously comparing profiles in the database to identify matches between hiring agents and job applicant agents.

19. (Original) The matching engine of claim 18 further comprising a notification mechanism responsive to identification of a match for notifying users associated with agents associated with a match.

20. (Previously Presented) The matching engine of claim 18 further comprising:

an interface receiving job applicant agent profiles;

an interface receiving hiring agent profiles;

wherein the mechanism for continuously comparing profiles is invoked in response to receiving a new profile.

21. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for incrementally revealing information in a profile matching system comprising:

providing a plurality of profiles in memory of a computing device, each profile associated with a user and each profile comprising a set of attributes describing the associated user;

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at least one restricted information section within a profile such that the profile can be accessed <u>by the users accessing the computing device</u> while the restricted information <u>section</u> remains protected <u>from the accessing users</u>;

automatically matching profiles based on correspondence of attributes specified in the profiles, including attributes within the restricted section;

<u>with the computing device,</u> presenting automatically matched profiles to <u>the</u> users associated with the profile in a manner that prevents exposing the restricted information section;

enabling each user that is presented with a matched profile to indicate further interest; and

responsive to receiving indication of <u>the</u> further interest from all <u>the</u> users associated with a matched profile, presenting <u>with the computing device</u> detailed information including <u>information in</u> the restricted information section <u>of a matched profile</u>.

22. (Previously Presented) A state machine for use in an human resources matching engine, the state machine comprising:

an unmatched state;

an automatched state reached from the unmatched state upon detection of a substantial correspondence between a first stored profile and a second stored profile;

a first interested state reached from the automatched state upon indication that a user associated with the first stored profile is interested in pursuing a relationship with a user associated with the second stored profile;

a second interested state reached from the automatched state upon indication that a user associated with the second stored profile is interested in pursuing a relationship with a user associated with the second stored profile;

a not interested state reached from the automatched state upon indication that either the user associated with the first stored profile or the user associated with the second stored profile is not interested in pursuing a relationship with the other user; and

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an evaluating state reached from the first interested state upon indication that a user associated with the second stored profile is interested in pursuing a relationship with a user associated with the first stored profile or upon indication that a user associated with the first stored profile is interested in pursuing a relationship with a user associated with the second stored profile.

' 23. (Currently Amended) A method implemented by processes running on a human resources server for matching job applicants with hiring agents, the method comprising the acts of:

generating a plurality of needs profiles, wherein each needs profile comprises attributes about a need associated with a particular hiring agent;

storing the needs profiles as a data record in memory accessible by the human resources server;

generating a plurality of capability profiles, wherein each capability profile includes attributes of a job applicant;

storing the capabilities profiles as a data record in memory accessible by the human resources server; [[and]]

repetitively and automatically matching the needs profiles and capability profiles to identify matched profiles, wherein a match comprises a set of profiles judged to be substantially compatible based upon correspondence of the attributes specified therein [[.]] ; and

notifying a first user associated with one of the needs profiles and a second user associated with one of the capability profiles of the match, wherein the notifying comprises providing a degree of compatibility for the match to the first user and a degree of compatibility for the match to the second user.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[24]] 23 wherein the act of notifying comprising presenting a selected subset of attributes from the matched profile to users associated with the matched profile.

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26. (Original) The method of claim 25 further comprising:

responding to the notification with an indication of further interest in the identified match; and

generating a detailed notification message to the users associated with the matched profiles in response to receiving response messages from both users associated with a particular matched profile.

27. (Original) The method of claim 23 wherein the act of generating a capability profile comprises including attributes within the capability profile that describe the associated user's desire to apply particular skills in a future employment.

28. (Original) A signal-bearing medium tangibly embodying a program of machine-readable instructions executable by a digital processing apparatus to perform a method for job applicants with hiring agents, the method comprising:

generating a plurality of needs profiles, wherein each needs profile comprises attributes about a need associated with a particular hiring agent;

storing the needs profiles as a data record;

generating a plurality of capability profiles, wherein each capability profile attributes of a job applicant;

storing the capabilities profiles as a data record; and

repetitively and automatically matching the needs profiles and capability profiles to identify matched profiles, wherein a match comprises a set of profiles judged to be substantially compatible based upon correspondence of the attributes specified therein.

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29. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the users comprise job applicants or supplier agents and hiring agents or employers, wherein the profiles comprise profiles associated with the job applicants or supplier agents and profiles associated with the hiring agents or employers, and wherein the attributes in the restricted sections of the profiles associated with the applicants or supplier agents comprises attributes associated with the applicants and the restricted sections of the profiles associated with the hiring agents or employers comprises attributes associated with the employers.

30. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein degrees of compatibility for the first and second users differ in value.

31. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein the degrees of compatibility each comprise a score for a set of matching components.

32. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein the first user comprises a particular one of the hiring agents and the second user comprises a particular one of the job applicants and wherein the set of matching components comprise components representative of skills and education, location, and compensation.

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